Cover Your Face and Turn a Blind Eye; You Never Cared Enough for the Truth

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Cover Your Face and Turn a Blind Eye; You Never Cared Enough for the Truth

by NeonLite

Summary

Dr. Ivo Robontik was what one might call many things, but one of them was not *stupid*.

(There was no way he fell for the same trick twice. There's no way he was going to be-left here to die *again*-)

But denying the truth as it spat him in the face, an angry robot that won't stop hating, metal healing over like a scab wound?

He wasn't stupid. He was just good at focusing on what mattered.

Notes

Alright real quick, I'm going to have to ask everyone to look at the tags because this is a lot darker than my other Sonic story. None of those things are going to be looked in depth too much (because one of the points of this is Eggman overlooks Metal *a lot*.)

TW: Choking and Neo kills a critter over the intercom.

(Also Eggman is farsighted. Not important in the slightest, but he's like that because I want him to be.)

See the end of the work for more notes

Dr. Ivo Robontik was what one might call, a genius.

That word was far too humble for the being he was but words couldn't do justice in comprehending his mental prowess. He was the smartest, the best, the savior of this planet, a gift upon the Earth!

Clanging, heavy and loud as a badnik was torn apart, metal casing falling and tearing as easily as skin.

He was going to release the world from its shackles, reborn in the best image, his!

The sound of footsteps faded, heels clinking against the floor and out the room, the beeps of the last badniks cutting out with a final SMASH !

He had taken the name Eggman and embraced it, a mockery turned to strength. Ivo was human but Eggman?

Eggman was a symbol, something that struck *fear*. All knew his design, all knew to cower under his name!

The faint sound of clanging, the claws scratching across the wall as they moved further away.

Eggman exhaled slowly as he listened, the room empty and hallway quiet. He slowly crawled out of his hiding spot and dusted himself, quietly making his way across the room.

(Because if one was going to rule an empire, one had to have control over their *pets*.)

He opened the drawer and pulled out a tablet, quickly moving and ducking back into his hiding spot, stepping over the still bodies of his badniks, trying to keep his internal fuming down.

How dare he? How dare Metal Sonic even dream of-

A sharp shriek echoed throughout the base, the cry of a little critter being cut with a squealing *SQUISH*.

Eggman exhaled, the sound shaky and weak as he quickly ducked behind the overturn desk he hid behind.

(There were barely any badnik with critters in them *left*.)

“Focus Ivo,” he muttered, turning on his laptop, “Focus.”

(That was over the intercom.)

As he booted up his programs and directed more badniks to attack Metal, he tried opening Metal's programming again.

Access Denied.

Administrator password needed

"I am- UGHHHHH," he groaned, burying his head into his fists. "Damn it, damn it, *damn it*."

He wasn't sure what Metal Sonic's plan was. He wasn't even sure why Metal Sonic was doing any of this.

(He hated not knowing.)

He inhaled as he relaxed slightly, uncurling.

Was this why Metal Sonic was sent back? Did his future self really give him a useless, unloyal brat??

(No.)

He exhaled, focusing. He needed to think.

Think.

Metal Sonic must be trying to defeat Sonic on his own. Perhaps Metal realized that he had no purpose after Sonic's inevitable defeat. Perhaps he realized that Eggman was getting tired of his failures, even when his technology was so advanced. Metal Sonic's self-healing mechanism was *still* something Eggman hadn't figured out, no matter how many times he took Metal apart and no matter how many hours he spent pouring over Metal's code.

No.

None of those things would've led to Metal Sonic rebelling. It would have to be a catastrophic discovery, one that would make him change his approach to *everything*.

One discovery, the slow connecting of dots that maybe, maybe Eggman didn't have as much control over him as Metal initially assumed. That maybe, just maybe, he could do whatever he wanted, if he figured out how to block Eggman and *keep him out*.

(The cruel truth of the matter, one he would never admit, was that *he* wasn't the one who built Metal Sonic.

The daunting truth was he found Metal Sonic. Stamped with his brand dab on the forehead, a letter and a bag filled with gems, leading him to Time Stones and Little Planet, a gift from his future self. An angry, spiteful version of Sonic; a robot that matched his speed and strength. Metal that could heal minor injuries, a code that almost warped against almost all tampering.)

Was this the help the future him sent? Was this the Metal Sonic from before, the one that helped him take over the world in alternate timeline?

(Was that timeline still a thing? What changed, pulling a major player from one time and dumping it in another, one where he would lose and lose and *lose*.)

What did he do wrong? What did he do differently, to make that robot hunt him like prey?

He didn't know.

("I always know everything!")

He *didn't* **know**.

Every program activated to override the password crashed instantly. He was trapped in this dingy room, far away from his main computer, cowering like a-

The door groaned as it was pulled off it's hinges and Eggman had to cover his mouth to prevent a scream as it was hurled into the room, crashing against the wall.

The footsteps were slow and deliberate as Metal Sonic walked into the room. Eggman held his breath as badniks were kicked to the side, clattering as they rolled out of the way.

Metal paused, the silence stretching on for seconds, minutes.

(The base was so *quiet*.)

He exhaled as he heard something clattering outside, straightening up as he attempted to relax his heart. That was close, that was too close, he couldn't get caught *not yet*, he had to reign Metal in, get control-

He froze as he saw the shadow, his breaths quickening as he pushed back up against the table, slowly craning his head upwards.

Two red eyes, piercing and deadly, stared down into his. Metal Sonic- but *wrong*- stood above him, his head propped against his fist, staring down at him in almost childish disapproval.

"…You look different," he breathed, staring at the widened quills with white streaks. A metallic hum cut through the air, the thing peering down at him, inspecting him, like he was a tiny insignificant *bug*.

"Peek-a-boo," the words crackled out of a new voicebox, the robot slowly covering its face and leaning closer, uncovering his face so that Eggman could see his red- *red, why would he ever choose red*- eyes again. "I see you."

And two claws hooked under Eggman's armpits and Ivo *screamed*.

The sound was cut off as his back slammed into the wall, his screams devolving to harsh coughs. Metal Sonic's claws slowly moved up his arm and to his face, cupping it and *squeezing*, bringing his claws down it, making Eggman howl.

"Stop it!" he yelled, as Metal squished the fat on his cheeks, his jaw aching from the pressure. "S-STOP!"

Metal Sonic stared at him, the pressure lightening, just enough, for Eggman to let out a shaky exhale.

Then the claws were around his throat and he couldn't *breathe*.

He gasped as he clawed Metal's arms, spluttering as he uselessly tried to shove his feet out-but it wasn't working- his mind clouding up as he let out hacking gasps.

He couldn't die like this.

He *wouldn't* die like this.

Ivo Robotnik was too great to fall in such a pitiful way, and Eggman was too legendary! He would fall fighting for his cause because if he couldn't free the world from it's shackles who *would*-

He coughed as Metal pushed him against the floor, his arms falling to his sides.

He couldn't die like this.

He couldn't… couldn't…

"S-stop," he whispered between gasps, his body limp. The only thing he knew, the only thing that was, were the cold merciless hands strangling him, the weight pushing him down.

And then the weight was lifted and he could *breathe*.

He gasped before breaking down in a coughing fit, grasping his throat as he rolled over, trying to ground himself on the cool floor. He spluttered every time he tried to speak so he stopped, his legs failed to move whenever he tried to bring them closer so he left them be, and the room was cold and quiet and he almost died in here and *no one would've even known-*

The sound of choked gasping cut through his thoughts, and he forgot how to breathe when he heard the sound of claws scraping against metal. A shiver ran up his spine as he swallowed, his fingers trembling as he slowly brought them to his mouth and waited- waited for whatever Metal Sonic was going through to end because he couldn't run and he was going to *die* here-

The sound of footsteps filled his ear before a CLANG collapsed any conceivable thoughts he might have had.

Eggman stayed where he was for a minute, an hour, seconds, before he slowly rolled back around, his arms propping him upward gently. The sight of Metal crouching and clutching its head filled his vision, and Eggman allowed his eyes to wander to the dented wall.

'…Oh.' The last coherent part of his brain whispered. 'Metal bashed his head against the wall.'

"WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH YOU!" he yelled, coughs raking his body as he gasped. "YOU ALMOST KILLED ME!"

(Because the fear and had been replaced by fire, licking and burning his chest, kick starting his pride. Because if he was going to die here he was *going* to say his piece.)

"You are not dead," the robot whispered, and Eggman almost couldn't contain his shriek.

"YOU ALMOST KILLED ME!" and he wasn't sure if it was the tears or the fact Metal seemed to have knocked his glasses over in his choking session, but Metal blurred as he got closer so Eggman scooted back.

“Get away from me you crazy, good for *nothing*-!”

Metal simply crawled closer, the black thing around his waist pooling onto the floor as he became a blob of blue and sharp red eyes in Eggman’s view. “I did not kill you.”

“Get back, get back-”

“You are not dead,” it repeated, as it backed Eggman into a wall. “I know the pressure it takes to snap your neck. You are not dead. I am better than you in that way.”

(The scratch across Metal’s paintwork was clear as day even with his terrible vision, but Eggman held his tongue.)

He scoffed, scrubbing his eyes as he smiled, cruel and fake and empty. “Real wonderful accomplishment there Metal Sonic. Real damn special.”

“I am better than you because I am not like you,” Metal Sonic repeats, the sentence sounding rehearsed and empty, almost like a hollow lie Metal has conceived upon himself. “But do not worry. You will get part of what you want. And my name is Neo Metal Sonic.”

Metal-Neo if that’s what the brat insists on calling himself, got into a seated position and stared down at him, waiting for a response.

“Are you expecting a thank you?” He could still feel the claws, he could still taste death- “You’re not ever getting one.”

Metal simply stared him down before saying, “I’m going to be the real Sonic.”

And Eggman couldn’t contain his groan as Neo stood up, walking away from him. “Don’t be an idiot.”

And Metal stopped and Metal stayed.

“You can’t seriously be that stupid,” Eggman repeated, pushing whatever survival instincts he had away because this was ridiculous- “You turned yourself into that thing. You blocked my access to your code! And you still, *somehow* still believe that you're the real Sonic? Wake. Up. You’re a robot. An insignificant, weak copy.”

“Watch your tongu-”

“No,” he snapped, pushing himself up and shaky legs, his hand

returning to its spot on his neck. “If I’m dying, I’m saying my piece. You are *pathetic*. You are fake, made by me to *obey* me. You’ve failed your purpose. I don’t know why on Earth I sent myself *garbage*.”

Metal Sonic smashed his fist into the wall and Eggman accepted his fate.

He didn’t however, expect the plaster to part, for a pipe to come into view, for Metal to tug and tug and *tug,* the pipe smashing, water spluttering-

Before Neo turned on him in an instant, the pipe smashing against his skull with a thunderous *THUD* and all went black.

When he awoke it was to a pounding headache, an empty room, and a box.

And he slowly picked the box up, wincing as he massaged his temple. He was wearing glasses again, so at least Metal had the decency to fetch him a new pair. The cover was removed and set aside, and Eggman froze as he stared into the contents of the container.

A blueprint, one of a dragon called Neo Overlord. The plans for world domination, an invitation for Eggman to tune in when he defeated Sonic and copied his data.

(But that. That wasn’t enough to make Eggman afraid. Metal always lost to Sonic, Sonic will just beat up his pathetic little robot and he would do a whole system memory wipe on it just like he should’ve in the first place.)

What made him freeze, his blood curling into cold dread was what was under the plans.

A stamp, the ones he always did for his delivery, his welding signature, his brand.

And a letter.

And Eggman slowly unfolded it, *Ivo's* fingers trembling as he read the sentences again and again.

Who said you were the one to send me back?

Who said my name was Metal Sonic at all?

(Fast as Sonic.

From a different timeline, one where he was supposed to have *won*.

Metallic wounds healing, metal growing atop of metal.

A timeline *he* won.

Who said my name was Metal Sonic at all?)

Team Chaotix freed him.

Sonic and his friends defeated Neo.

He left Metal's body behind, left behind all the implications that swirled in his mind for the hours he was trapped.

He made backups. He could reupload Metal Sonic into a new frame, rework his memory and tighten his restrictions. Metal Sonic needed to be punished for even the mere consideration of betraying him.

Neo wasn't important. In the grand scheme of things, Sonic wasn't either. All Eggman truly wanted from Metal was obedience and it wouldn't be hard to break that into Metal.

There would be no setbacks. There would be no future technological wonders of metal rebuffing itself, the slow movements of a robot

getting back up and fixing itself slowly. It would all be his current work, just as he should've done in the beginning.

If that being wasn't Metal Sonic, Eggman would make him one, no matter what.

(*A pause in Metal's movements, hands slowly moving towards it's face before it turned to Eggan, pupils pinpriks and vibrating.*

"THIS IS NOT MY BODY!" and Metal pulled against his restraints, hard enough that Eggman leapt away from his seat. "WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WHAT HAVE YOU DONE, ***WHERE IS MY BODY?!"***)

And he would remove that nasty voice box Neo inserted into himself.

Eggman liked Metal better *silent*.

Maybe he should've noticed it when Metal fell directly into line so easily again, following orders and opting to remain in rest mode after.

Maybe he should've noticed it when Metal had no visible protests to being logged off for months, replaced with Infinite and the Phantom Ruby.

Maybe he should've noticed with the creation of Orbot and Cubot, the little acknowledgement and little refusal to the chatty bots who talked for hours when Metal Sonic *hated* other badniks.

(Or maybe when he repaired Metal Knuckles or maybe when he gave Tails Doll a makeshift funeral or maybe when Sage came home, and two heads following him became three.)

Metal Sonic was subdued for years. The spirit he used to have, one the spent hours poured into plans upon plans about strategies to defeat Sonic seemed to die alongside Neo, and Eggman got the perfect robot. An assistant and bodyguard, loyal until the end.

(Despite that, he couldn't get rid of Metal Sonic's hatred. No matter what he did or removed, the code would restore itself, making Metal lose all sense of self whenever Sonic popped around, an angry caged animal clawing Sonic's eyes, furious crackles of static screams.

The hate was still there and it might be growing, but if Sonic wasn't in the vicinity of Metal's sensors, Metal didn't seem to *care*.

So, he kept him away from Sonic. Simple, truly, the solution.)

Maybe it was because it's been years since Neo, years since Metal's claws wrapped around his throat, and years since he's even bothered with Metal's restrictions at all minus temporary accommodations, and maybe it's because that Metal seemed to tolerate his chatty 'siblings' and maybe it was because Sage was taking all his attention, trying to fix her body and help her get integrated into the EggNet.

It must be that last one.

(Eggman would've seen the betrayal happening a mile away.)

The first clue-*mistake* because that is what this was- was the silence of the base, his footsteps echoing ominously.

The second hint was the deactivated forms of Cubot and Orbot, thrown in front of his office doors, eyes empty and visors cracked.

The third hint was when he (calmly) walked into the room and manually activated Sage. Not because he thought something was wrong, but because it felt nice to wake her up himself sometimes. To almost shake her shoulders, prepare her for a new day.

But the screen remained static and Sage's voice didn't cheerfully respond to his. He tried again.

And again.

And again.

And he wasn't sure when his breathing became faster, when he started pulling his mustache, when he smashed his fist into his desk, hoping, begging Sage to wake up and just answer him.

But then he heard a slow clap and he was thrust back into the past, his breath catching in his chest. And he slowly turned around and made eye contact with…

Sonic.

"Hey Egghead," Sonic (Sonic, not Metal, calm down-) casually smirked, leaning against the door with a hum. "What's cooking? This place smells like fried robots served on loser grounds."

"Go away hedgehog," he whispered, clenching his shaking fists. "Leave me alone."

"Funny," and Sonic walked in, rolling Orbot's body over with his foot.

“Didn’t think you even cared about any of them.”

And Eggman was in his face and shoving Sonic forward, watching the hedgehog stumble backwards. “Get out!” he screamed, his face turning red because his daughter wasn’t responding, something was wrong he had to *fix her*- “Get out! I’m not doing anything, leave me alone!”

Sonic turned to him in shock before his eyes darkened, but he took a step back as Eggman huffed.

“She’s not gone, by the way.”

He paused, slowly looking towards Sonic, really looking at him this time. “H-huh?”

“Didn’t think the great Eggman could stutter,” Sonic said with a scoff, before his face softened with a small frown. “She’s just going to be off for a little while. All the badniks should turn back on around the same time. But you don’t care about the rest of them do you?”

“What did you do?” because that must means Tails is nearby and that must means Tails is messing with something and all he could do besides strangling the brat in front of him is hope that Tails wasn’t messing with Sage’s code because he could ruin **everything**- “WHAT DID YOU DO?”

“Nothing man, geez,” Sonic replied, rolling his eyes before walking out, his hands causally against his neck, pushing his quills upward. Eggman hesitated before following after him, their footsteps the only sound echoing throughout the base.

(But something’s different.

Something’s *wrong*.)

He waited a few minutes as they just wandered endlessly, walking past collapsed badniks and boxes, their contents cluttered across the floor as their grip remained tight on the cardboard. Eggman focused on that, and not listening to the oddly familiar tune Sonic was humming, not wanting to think about it.

“…Sonic?”

Sonic paused, ending his tune as he chose to hum in affirmation. Eggman clenched his fist, looking to the side, the quiet halls and

narrow hallway, the lack of sass and the quiet made the alarm bells in his head kick in, because since when did Sonic hum when he could *sing?*

“Why are you here? I didn’t do anything.”

“Oh I know,” Sonic looked at him, his stare blank and his face somber. “Honestly, it’s kinda unfair that both of us are stuck in this predicament, isn’t it?”

Eggman took a step back, blinking slowly. “What… predicament?”

“The one you’re about to be trapped in.”

And Sonic *dashed* forward- didn’t run, his feet **lifted** off the ground- and grabbed his face, smashing it into the wall behind him.

And Eggman was out like a light.

Conscious returned slowly, his vision blurry as he flinched at the pounding in his head. He lifted his hand to massage his temple-

And his arm stopped, falling flat against it’s restraints.

(He knew this feeling.)

“Don’t look so surprised,” he flinched back into the chair he was chained to, Sonic staring at him with a bored expression. “I was going to do this again someday.”

(Deny. Deny, deny, deny. There was no way that he fell for the same trick *twice*. There’s no way he was going to be-*left here to die **again***-)

Sonic smirked as his eyes turned from green to red and Eggman knew *dread.*

“Calm down,” Metal said, slowly, stretching in a way that was so Sonic but fake, *wrong*- “Orbot and Cubot will free you in half an hour.”

“What are you…” and he swallowed, the lump in his throat choking his words down. “*What are you going to do?*”

Sonic scoffed, a cold, tired look on his face, so sad and out of place Eggman couldn’t help but wilt. “I’m done with this. With all this.”

"…All what?"

"I know you know who I am," Metal (Sonic) snapped, the illusion crinkling it's nose in disgust. "I know you've known since Neo."

Eggman flinched back but Metal wasn't done, smashing his fists against the wall. "I know you know. That's why you tried so hard to keep me on a leash. That's why you're so afraid of me. That's why you made *Sage*."

And his anger was back, strong and spiteful and that was his *daughter*- "If you hurt her I swear I will **melt you**-"

"Calm down *dad*," Metal spat, unplugging computers around the room. "It was your daughter that enabled me to do this."

…*What?*

"…I'm not afraid of you," the words tumbled out of his mouth as the last monitor fell into darkness and two shining red pupils turned to stare at him, the schelera changing back to black.

Metal scoffed, turning to the door. "Keep lying to yourself. Who knows, maybe it'll be the truth someday."

(Cold metal and sharp claws, his heaving breaths months later, stolen even in his nightmares.)

Metal turned to walk out of the room, fluffy fur falling to crisp metal.

"Wait-!" he struggled, pulling against his chains as Metal paused, watching from the door. "Wait, where are you going?!"

Metal's claws (*claws that were once soft gloves, nails grown and metallized, but that experiment failed so what happened-)* and shrugged, his shoulders falling lax. "Ending all this. …Goodbye."

And the door shut with a click and Eggman sat there, frozen and numb.

(It was Cubot who found him, letting out a wail as he tackled Eggman in a way he hasn't *for years*, blubbering apologies as he pulled the chains, Orbot and Sage quickly following behind and untying them.

"Find him, find him!" Orbot screamed and Eggman couldn't even register that the bot was *crying*, yanking the casing off his fingers as he screamed. "He's going to hurt himself, he's gonna hurt himself-!"

And Sage teleported into his arms, suddenly wailing as he slowly wrapped his arms around her. “I’m sorry Father, ‘*m so so sorry*, he said this would make him happy but I didn’t know *what*, and now his location is off and he’s not connected to the EggNet and *I don’t wanna lose him please Father, please, please PLEASE*-”

Orbot and Sage’s requests (begs) echoed in his ears, as Cubot grasped his shoulder and stared at him with such hopelessness-

Ivo hugged his girl closer as she cried and prayed Sonic would show *mercy*. Just this once.)

It was Sonic, who dragged a broken Metal back, pounding and kicking and slamming the door, a single hand wrapped around Metal’s, gloved fingers intertwined with his knocked out metallic doppelganger.

“Eggman! Get your face out here right now!” and Sonic was furious, his pupils pinpricks and breaths heaving and *scared*, tears slipping down his face. “EGGMAN!”

(Scratches and bruises adorned Sonic's form, four harsh claw marks down his cheeks still red. And Metal laid on the floor silently-knocked out- his head dangerously loose on his shoulders, dents and scratches covering him, harsh and hollow.)

It only took a short nod for Sage to open the door and teleport them there, quickly scrambling out of his grasp. She immediately dived towards Sonic, attempting to tug Metal’s (broken, broken, broken) body away from him.

“Let go, let go, let go!” she screeched, angry tears bubbling down her face as Sonic’s grip tightened.

“No, get away from him-AH!” and Cubot had thrown himself against

Sonic, Orbot pulling Metal's arm free from Sonic's grip and hugged the blue robot, his voicebox letting out harsh crackling and popping, painful and loud, his peeling fingers grasping, *clawing* Metal's chest as Cubot just quietly laid his head against Metal's smooth one.

(Where Orbot yelled and screamed and cried, Cubot was silent. He had allowed Orbot to scratch and pull at him, but he was silent as he simply just held his counterpart.

That might've been scarier than Orbot and Sage trying to break their voiceboxes in grief because since when was *Cubot* quiet?

That might've been, if he didn't know Metal had *hurt* them, doing something to crack their faces and something to make Sage glitch in and out of her physical form.)

"What did you do to him?" Sonic whispered, tears slipping down his face as he stared at Eggman, horror-stricken as he grasped the fur on his chest. "WHAT DID YOU DO TO HIM-?"

"Nothing," and it wasn't as snappy as he would've wanted (more pathetic than he could've imagined) but he had spent the better part of an hour comforting Sage. Comforting a Sage who apparently knew what Metal had left to do.

They *all* knew what Metal had gone out to do, *had* known, for *weeks*.

(He hated not knowing.)

"Liar, LIAR! I TRUST HIM MORE THAN I TRUST YOU *LIAR*, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!"

"Nothing," he repeated as he shakily stood, glaring at Sonic. "I didn't do *anything*."

(It wasn't him.)

Sonic's fists clenched as he snarled, widening his stance as he stared Eggman down. "You're lying," he spat, venom and hatred in his eyes, so similar to Metal, the path that Metal had gone, where love had been hollowed out by hatred, where anger replaced naïve happiness.

(He was going to release the world from its shackles, reborn in the best image, his!)

He had.

(I know the pressure it takes to snap your neck.)

He beat Sonic.

(I'm going to be the real Sonic.)

He broke Sonic.

(*WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WHAT HAVE YOU DONE,* ***WHERE IS MY BODY?!)***

He won.

"It was the Time Stones," Eggman slowly started, Sonic's eyes widened. "I didn't... *build* the original Metal Sonic, it was a gift from me. An ultimate weapon from my future self to help me win."

Sonic looked between Metal and him, a shaky laugh bubbling out as he covered his mouth with his glove, swallowing as tears slipped down his face. "And you *believed* that?"

(He was the smartest, the best, the savior of this planet, a gift upon the Earth!)

He clenched his fist as Sage's wails started back up, Metal Sonic's eyes slowly lighting back up. Sonic was immediately at his side, grasping his hand and Metal-

He *melted*. His whole frame seemed to shudder before falling silent, his optics turning off as Sage kissed his forehead, again and again, her ugly sobs cutting any words she may have had as Cubot hugged his head, his optics dimmed as Orbot smashed his chest, wrapping his arms around Metal and nuzzling him.

(Sonic loved and loved and loved. He fought for the world, fought for his friends, but he fought for freedom above all, wanting everyone to make their own decisions even if they're bad ones. He won't accept everything, but he does believe everyone can be their best self if they try and he was always going to give them that chance to *try*. Not naivety, but a novelty, because choice was important to him, and believes it should be, for everyone.

How cathartic, to have that ideology fail another Sonic.

How pathetic, thinking he could ever truly collar someone born to be free.)

“I’m not stupid,” he snapped, his anger falling flat as only Sage and Sonic paid him any mind. “I’m not stupid.”

Sage’s eye widened and she looked down at Metal before staring at him, heartbroken and *scared*. “You *knew*?”

“Of course I did,” he retaliated, watching as Sage recoil in shock, horror that didn’t belong on her especially pointed *at him*, prominent with the tears building up in her eyes. “He’s insane.”

“Because you broke him,” Sonic whispered back, intertwining his fingers with Metal’s again, and slowly bringing the metal hand to his mouth to kiss it. “So you fix it.”

He couldn’t.

He sighed, burying his face in his hands. “How old do you think he was Sonic? There’s nothing left of that hedgehog. Not anymore.”

“*Why not?”* Sonic turned to him, a cruel smirk dancing across his face. “I thought you were the best. That you could do anything. Half the time you’re trying to mess with stuff you shouldn’t, so do it now. Bring this *Sonic* back.”

(Sonic. That was who Metal was, the name he was born with; because Sonic had been born but Metal was his stubbornness for *freedom*.

Metal *survived*. But Sonic didn't get to *live*.)

He hesitated, his eyes wandering to the ground. “There would be two of you,” he deflected, one last desperate attempt to make Sonic back off- “You really want a twin?”

(It would break Sage’s heart, knowing the truth.

Not because it was something that made him lay awake at night, wondering what he could’ve done to change Sonic to Metal, to twist someone so much that there was nothing of them remaining.

It almost scared him.)

“I don’t care,” the answer was predictable as Sonic held Metal closer, Orbot and Cobot moving just enough before lying down on him, curling up as Orbot brought Metal’s arms over them. “I don’t *care,* no one deserves to be **this**, he can’t stand it Eggman *I’ll* give him the life he’s been missing and we can change his name just turn him back-”

And Eggman exhaled, shaking his head. “I can’t. Not anymore.”

“…Why?” Cubot was the one who piped up, his voice spluttering and crackling because Cubot’s voice was terrible on a good day- “He doesn’t want to be here anymore. He doesn’t want to *live* anymore turn him back-” and at Orbot’s pained cry Cubot shut up, Sage letting out another sob as she cradled his head, Sonic moving to place it onto her lap.

(He doesn’t want to live anymore.)

“How long?” the words slipped through before he could bite them down, but Orbot just shook his head over and over, a cry cutting through the painful crackling.

“What do you mean you can’t?” Sonic whispered, shaking his head slowly in disbelief. “What do you mean you can’t?”

“He was ten Sonic,” Ivo whispered, and he was suddenly hit with how *young* Sonic was. How young he still *is*. How it was this child trying to save someone and *failed*, and was turned into a slave.

(*Because if one was going to rule an empire, one had to have control over their* ***pets***.)

“And that’s not his original body. If I turn him back, which I can’t because I don’t even have the thing that can turn someone into a metal version that experiment *failed*, all he has left is his mind. And that would die without a body.”

“So why would you use him?” Sonic whispered, disbelief as his hands shook in the air, *tightening* strangling. “Why use him at all when you knew that that wasn’t just a robot?!”

And it was Orbot who scoffed, looking up, his mouth cocked upwards in one of his fake grins. “H-he us----ed t-t-t-o *turn* critters i-nnnnt-o f-f-fuel. *W-why* d-dooo y-oou th-” and his words cut off as his voicebox finally gave, but the smile didn’t fade.

The meaning was understood.

And the horror that Sage and Sonic stared at him with, the judgement and fear and *sadness*, made him take a step back.

(He thinks he’s known this whole time.)

“He wanted to be useful,” Eggman slipped back, but he could feel the mask being placed on, the *horror* he’s never allowed to sink in because *what good* would that do for his empire. “If future me didn’t send him back that means he sent himself back, that he *chose* to be with me. I was going to take full advantage of that. That’s who *I am*.”

“F-*Father no,”* Sage begged whispered, but he shook his head, watching as her face scrunched up in tears. That didn’t change anything, that didn’t change that nothing could be done, the only path that Metal Sonic could ever take was being loyal to him, and he was going to ensure that this little incident would never happen again-

Eggman was interrupted by the sounds of someone crying.

(Eggman didn’t turn around.)

Eggman was interrupted by the sounds of someone crawling across the metal floor, of whispered apologies, of metal moving and sobs- real ones- echoing throughout the room, Sage’s little hiccups as she begged for Metal to forgive her that she was so sorry-

(*Ivo* turned back. Just for a moment, just because the sounds of his daughter’s tears always made him want to hold her and remove her tear ducts, the sound making something in his chest ache painfully.

It was Orbot who stared back, who held a crying Sage tucked against him, her body easily curling up against his. And Sonic was further back, holding Metal and Cubot with his back turned to him, tears hitting against their casing one slow drip at a time, his shoulders shaking with silent sobs.

It was Orbot who stared back, nothing but disgust and vile anger before he lowered his head against Sage’s shoulder, slowly rubbing her back.)

And Eggman walked away.

End Notes

(Oh look, I can do the stuff I said I was going to do.)

Works inspired by this one:

Trap A blue Hedgehog but Metal Will prevail by Hi_Tobby

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